

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

Service -
Bry - Ideas

**5th Anniversary of AmeriCorps
Possible Policy Deliverables**

Expanded AmeriCorps Alums program

Broad message around participation of AmeriCorps Alums: Individuals who have successfully completed AmeriCorps are dedicated to serving their communities and will continue to do so throughout their lives. The AmeriCorps Alums are a resource to our Nation. It is our responsibility to ensure that the Alums have structured ways to connect to community service opportunities and can continue to serve their communities.

(1) Announcement of end goal to create a powerful AmeriCorps Alum program:

- ***President announces his intent to create an AmeriCorps Reserves program.*** This program would be modeled on the Military reserves program where AmeriCorps alums (and others?) would serve in the Reserve Corps on weekends and/or after work in exchange for funds that could be used toward: repaying student loans, financing further education for self or children, start-up costs for non-profits and charter schools, downpayment on a first home, etc. The mission of the Reserve Corps would be to address national problems and crises, including natural disasters and domestic social problems while, at the same time, working to renew and reinvigorate civic life by committing to service, responsibility, and citizenship. Reserve Corps members would be given flexibility in terms of how much time they were willing/able to serve each year and would be awarded correspondingly.

Possible policy options to institutionalize and support a Reserve Corps:

Background: During the 101st Congress (1989-90), Senator Barbara Mikulski introduced a similar concept in S. 408, the National Community Service Act of 1989. Like the Reserves proposal, S. 408 called for individuals to commit to a set time of service (three to six years of service) and required that the service be completed by serving either (1) two weekends a month and two weekends during the year; (2) or an average of nine hours per week. In exchange, volunteers would receive a \$3,000 voucher each year which could be used only for: (1) payment of a federally sponsored student loan; (2) downpayment for a first home; or (3) payment for educational tuition, fees, room, and board.

- (a) Legislation – President could transmit a bill to Congress to set up the AmeriCorps Reserves program. The legislation, like S. 408, would outline the perimeters and expectations for type of service, hours of service, funds, and applicable uses of funds.

Pro: This avenue would institutionalize the program and provide authorization for the activities as a line-item in the budget.

Con: It is unlikely that a national service bill would receive enough support in the

House to pass within the next year.

(b) Discretionary Fund – Set up Reserve Corps through the discretionary authority within the Corporation for National Service.

Pro: This option would allow CNS to begin building and developing the Reserve Corps immediately. It would also allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness in implementation.

Con: CNS may not have the authority to start up this program within its discretionary authority. If it did, it would likely come under great Congressional scrutiny.

(2) Announcement of First Steps:

• *President announces that he is asking the AmeriCorps Alums to mobilize in order to address three areas of national concern:* need for mentors, low-income housing, and relief in times of natural disasters. President would announce that AmeriCorps is partnering with the National Mentoring Partnership, Habitat for Humanity, and the Red Cross to respond to the call for help in these three areas and to mobilize the AmeriCorps alums. Through partnering with outside organizations, AmeriCorps could infuse alums into existing programs.

On an institutional level, this mobilization would allow AmeriCorps to set up a system of tracking alums and would allow for the beginning organizational framework to set up the Reserve Corps.

(3) Announcement of immediate steps and policy deliverables:

- Letter from President to all AmeriCorps alums asking them to respond to Call to Action
- Alum web site offering resources and information about joining this new initiative

(4) Other Policy Deliverables

- Reauthorization of AmeriCorps
- Yahoo Web Site